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ABSTRACT

In this brief overview of placement services for a comprehensive school, the following topics are discussed: (1) the history of job placement; (2) the need for job placement services (accountability); (3) general objectives of placement services; (4) format for establishing a school placement service; (5) school-business-industry cooperation; (6) basic requirements for selecting placement specialists; (7) job development; (8) evaluation of job placement services; and (9) follow-up procedures. (BM)

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PLACEMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMMUNICATION

COORDINATION

by
Raymond A. Wasil

Ultimate test of a school's commitment to its students.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A brief overview of an overall structure for Comprehensive School Placement Service.

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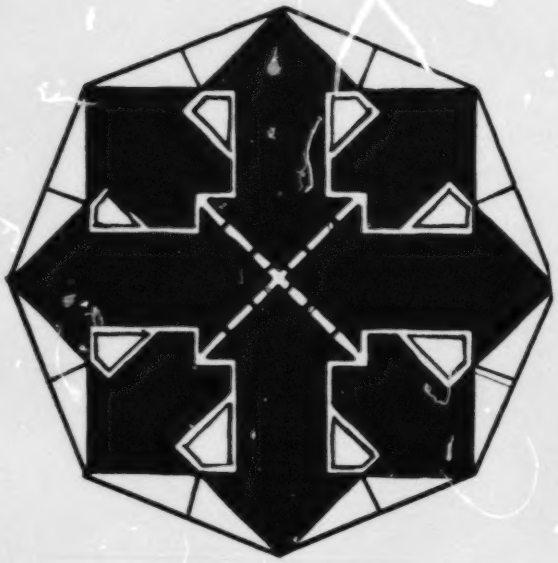


Brief History of Job Placement

Job Placement services entered the public schools of Ohio via the funding of counselors. As a result of the emphasis on college education, these services were directed primarily toward the college bound.

Data and catalogs flooded the counselors offices from colleges across the nation. Scholarships were established for the bright student who ranked high in school or in tests. College representatives visited the school. Special assemblies were held for the college bound.

Counselors were sometimes evaluated on the basis of how many students they aided into college and the status of the college which accepted their charges. In truth, some schools were evaluated on the same basis by the community. A school's status was determined by the number of college entrants.

With the expansion of vocational programming and the advent of joint vocational schools, vocational counselors were funded and workshops or seminars established to help prepare them.

Counselors designated as vocational counselors were primarily concerned with selection of youth for vocational programs, retention in said programs and often times in filling the class quota for state support funding. Responsibility for job placement of vocational graduates rested with the vocational teachers. The result of these developing trends was the division of the student population into three groups: College Preparatory, General, and Trade or Vocational.

It become obvious that the General student shared little in these efforts.

Due to their success, work study and vocational programs rapidly increased. At the same time, a number of community organizations became increasingly employment oriented due to the consciousness of difficulties faced by minorities, veterans, youth, etc.

The employer was suddenly faced with a multitude of contacts by these school and community groups, who all were asking for the same thing. JOBS!!

Negative attitudes soon developed and some employers turned to private employment agencies as a way of "self protection".

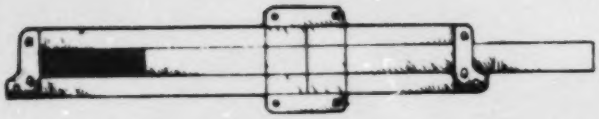
Historically, Ohio education has been involved with the placement of certain segments of the school population. Hopefully, continued growth in this area will result in a more comprehensive approach.

Public education can no longer afford to operate a fragmented placement service.

Placement: Accountability In Its Most Meaningful Form

THE NEED FOR PLACEMENT SERVICES

While there has always been some type of placement activity taking place in the schools in the past, for the most part, they have been directed toward the college bound student. Academically oriented teachers and counselors have coordinated services for youth within their area of interest. Today, a more comprehensive school based placement service is needed. Such a service would not curtail what is currently being done but would provide services for the total student body and would involve the teacher, counselor, and vocational staff



Various segments of school placement activities need to be coordinated within a systematic structure or preparation, placement, and follow-up.

Any evaluation of a meaningful career education program will be reflected by its placement component. Accountability is not reflected in the numbers who matriculate via programs in school; but rather how many of these young people can function in society.

No other major industry in our nation today can afford to turn out a product year after year and not determine its success on the open market. Other major industries control the marketing of their products and modify their production accordingly. In education, we could and should evaluate our product and modify the curriculum accordingly. Placement and follow-up services can provide feedback which can be used to evaluate our services.

Dr. Martin Essex, Ohio's State Superintendent of Education, stated that, "Job Placement Services can be seen as a possible function of the schools, and one which would indicate whether the schools have the marketable potentials. With placement services of this type, schools can get immediate feedback on their level of success and can make adjustments in curriculum or guidance services accordingly."

If we are looking for an accountability procedure which is definitive and relevant in its scope and application, we should look at school placement services. Utilizing placement services as the vehicle, accountability in its most comprehensive form can be realized. Guidance people have been successful, in the past in the area of college placement, just as some vocational teachers have been in the area of vocational placement.

Placement services for other youth have been available through guidance people, but for the most part, on an unstructured basis. In the area of college placement, guidance people have structured a system for placement. With the non-college bound, in most cases, no organized system has been developed.

A year around system where all youth exiting school will be provided with placement services, based on their needs, is and has been needed for some time by a public school system.

While efforts in college placement are certainly needed, similar services need to be developed for all youth. Haphazard placement of vocationally trained graduates may result in the decline of such programs.

Through job placement contacts and involvement with business and industry, job placement can service career education programs. Speakers, field trips, business resources, so necessary to a viable career education program, can be developed as a result of job placement activities.

Career education, in itself, must depend upon job placement and job placement must depend on career education activities to train youth to obtain and retain jobs. Each is dependent on the other.

Schools are the great motivators for change. Youth spend their most formative years in its structure. Records and data are available on youth. Courses can be redesigned to aid them explore career areas via career education programming.

Schools nationally are being pressed to account for the result of twelve years of education. Job placement can provide the direction necessary to modify and make meaningful career education efforts.

In Title 1 of the Vocational Education Amendment of 1968, Part D (Exemplary Programs and Projects) under "Finding and Purpose" the following excerpted quotations are found:

"Sec. 141. The Congress finds it is necessary to reduce the continuing seriously high level of youth unemployment by developing means for giving the same kind of attention as is now given to the college preparation needs of those young persons who go on to college, to the job preparation needs of the two out of three young persons who end their education at or before completion of the secondary school . . . . .

The purposes of this part, therefore, are to stimulate new ways to create a bridge between school and earning a living for young people, who are still in school, who have left school either by graduation or by dropping out, or who are in post secondary programs of vocational preparation, and to promote cooperation between public education and manpower agencies."

Section 143 also refers to "Programs or Projects for intensive occupational guidance and counseling during the last years of school and for *Initial Job Placement*" (underlining added by this writer).

The question is not one of will we, but rather of, "How we will develop both Career Education and Job Placement Services."

General Objectives of Placement Services

There are three general objectives which any successful Job Placement Service should incorporate.

1. Placement and follow-up services for all youth commensurate with their interests, aptitude, and ability.
2. Preparation activities directed to all youth exiting school which will enable them to obtain and retain employment.
3. Development of lines of communication with business and industry which will facilitate the successful entry of youth exiting school into the labor market.

All three objectives may overlap or be incorporated within an activity. For example: A youth seeking employment might be sent to an employer with whom previous contact had been made. The youth may have been matched with the job opening on the basis of tests and expressed interest. The youth may have been prepared for the interview as a result of school group activities. Listed are more specific objectives toward which a placement service might direct itself.

- Development of a working relationship with vocational teachers, work study coordinators, and groups and organizations servicing youth outside of the school.
- Coordination of placement activities within a district by improving communications between teachers, counselors, and work study program coordinators.
- Providing data to students and school staff on employment trends within a given area.
- Development of employment opportunities for the physically, emotionally, and mentally handicapped, in conjunction with out-of-school agencies or resources.
- Development of means of providing job experiences for in-school youth in conjunction with Career Education
- Development of cooperative programs designed to update students, administration, and school staff relative to the employment market and employment requirements.
- Providing hard data necessary for the revision of existing curricula as well as the development of curricula.
- Providing a systematic approach for relevant follow-up studies.
- Improving communication with the general public, business, and industry, as well as community organizations.

Support form the school administration is imperative. Similarly, support from top leaders in business and industry would also be required. Prior to the establishment of any placement service, each major community group should be constacted and their support solicited. Cooperation, not competition, is the most effective approach. Agencies such as the State Employment Service, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Youth Service Organizations, as well as, the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, and professional associations, can provide the variety of services needed for the varied needs of the school population. Part-time employment of youth can also serve to help them determine their career choices. Cooperation can normally be generated from these varied organizations when the ultimate purpose of such cooperation is clearly defined.

Format For Establishing A School Placement Service

Each school district must assess its own needs prior to the establishment of placement structure. The type of structure to be used will be dependent on such factors as location of schools in relation to industry, life styles of the area, etc.

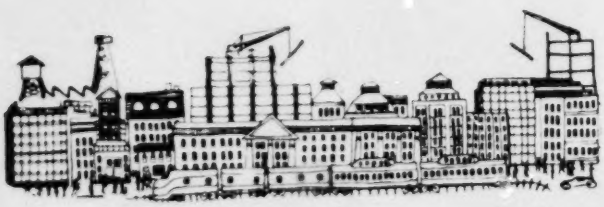
A sample overall structure might consist of the steps listed below:

1. Establishment of advisory committee. (School administration, business and industry, service organizations).
2. Survey in school youth, local industry, community—as to needs, occupational opportunities, and conduct follow-up studies.
3. Develop structure for services. Type of person needed, number needed, role description, format for follow-up, use of test and interest inventories.
4. Meet with work study, vocational teachers, and counselors to discuss structure of operation.
5. Selection of staff. This may occur at an earlier point, depending on scope of school placement service.

6. Organize central information data for district.
7. Publicize services via radio, television, newspaper, and speak to community groups.
8. Establish a speakers bureau made up of educators, business, and industry representatives.
9. Formalize a system for gathering of student data, accountability procedures, follow-up, feedback, and reports.
10. Develop newsletter.
11. Establish individual school advisory committee.
12. Establish periodic meeting times with various groups involved.

Placement, whether it be in a job or deferred via college, should be the ultimate goal of any placement service. Initial job placement may not, in itself, be sufficient. Retention on a job and upward mobility must be incorporated within the services provided. Comprehensive placement will result in some youth being employed while still in school. Summer employment, or part-time employment during school, can be a valuable learning experience. Dropouts may be referred for training in programs such as M.D.T.A., WIN, STRIDE, or jobs through local state employment services. Part-time employment may enable some potential dropouts to complete their education.

The third report of the "National Advisory Committee on Vocational Education", pointed out, "A good way to teach employability where it is not an integral part of every day life, is through employment. Every school with students who are not learning desirable employment habits at home should, to the extent the labor market allows, make part-time employment a regular part of the curriculum."



School-Business-Industry Cooperation

In order to be effective, a program of business-industry communication and co-operation must be developed. Without the support of employers, a placement service is doomed to limited success.

Prior to the establishment of the Placement Service, contact should be made with the local Chamber of Commerce for data on employers similarly the co-operation of the local State Employment services should be solicited.

- Prime business groups such as Kiwanis should be contacted. Speaking engagements should be scheduled and presentations discribing the Placement Services developed. Presentations should include not only an overview of the placement services but specifics as well.

FOR EXAMPLE: A description of current school programs in the field of Dental Assistant or Technician might be presented to the Dental Association.

- A request for information as to how the program might be improved could be solicited. Projected employment trends in the industry might be requested. It is difficult for a professional group to be negative when you are requesting their opinions and indicate a willingness to not only listen but cooperate as well.
- One of the greatest weaknesses of education has been its reluctance to communicate with business and industry in a manner acceptable to business and industry.
- While contacting groups which represent special industries a community business survey might also be conducted to determine which employers traditionally employ youth.

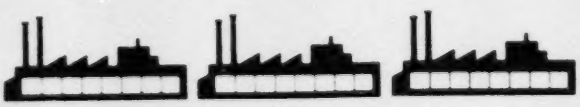
Data on an individual employer basis should be obtained in relation to:

1. Name of Employers—Address—Telephone Number.
2. Type of Business—Industry
3. Specific employment requirements — age, sex, size, while it might appear that this data is in conflict with current employment laws in effect you would only record data on those hired in the past.
4. Job Description.
5. Time of year they normally employ.
6. Specific data on whether they hire disadvantaged, physically handicapped, slow learners, etc.
7. Training programs—Apprenticeships opening date.

In total, data obtained would enable a Placement Service to determine which employers hire what types of youth at what time of year.

For the most part small employers hire the less skilled youth, whereas, larger employers are looking for the more technically trained.

- By having data related to an employers past employment practices, youth in school can be selected on the basis of their interests prior to being referred for job interviews.



Basic Requirements For Selecting Placement Specialists

The individual selected as a placement specialist should have had related experience in business and industry, or personnel work. Familiarity with the working practices of business and industry is a prime pre-requisite. A college degree is not necessarily a pre-requisite to employment. The same type of format currently used for employment of vocational non-degree personnel might be adopted.

The placement specialist should be employed full time, on a twelve month basis. A flexible daily schedule would be a necessity as evening or weekend activities might involve the placement specialist's time. The specialist would be expected to visit with students on the job, make presentations to community groups, and be present at functions at times or on days when school would not normally be in session.

The placement specialist should cooperatively develop a work schedule with his immediate supervisor. Employment patterns and related activities vary during a given year. Summer and vacation times may be slack times in a normal school regime, but constitute the busiest period for the placement specialists. Those times during the year, when counselors or teachers are not available, may constitute the placement specialists periods of prime involvement.

Placement specialists should not be assigned to tasks which will restrict them to the school as they must conform to the special hours which employers prefer in order to be the most effective.

The placement specialist student assignment load will vary depending on whether there is one placement specialist for all students in a school, or if the placement specialist is working with other placement specialists in a large school system and is assigned to work with a specified type of student.

The placement specialist should meet with his immediate supervisor and with other placement specialist on a scheduled weekly basis. It is necessary that not only the supervisor be kept up to date but that the placement specialists maintain communication with each other. Periodic, as well as weekly reports, would be expected. Pre-planning is of prime importance in order to take advantage of employment trends.

While a relatively free spirit, in regards to a standard school day, the placement specialist should be in the school on a scheduled basis. Office facilities will be necessary for the placement specialists and should be located in the school, wherever practicable.

Duties and Responsibilities of a Placement Specialist

Reports to the Director of Placement Services, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Director of Guidance or Director of Career Education Services—depending on the particular districts organizational structure. In a joint vocational school, the placement specialist may report to the Director or Principal of the joint vocational school.

Specific areas of responsibility or areas in which the placement specialist should function.

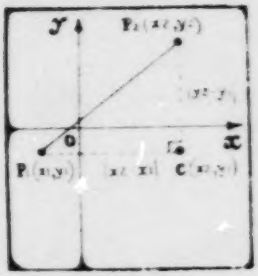
- Gathers data on each student he is responsible for. Cooperation of counselors, teachers and administration staff and the use of cummulative records are necessary.
- Coordinates pre-employment clinics for in-school and out-of-school youth.
- Collects information on local and national employment trends and disseminates the data to concerned school staff.
- Shares business-industry resources with career education coordinators and interested teachers.
- Visits business-industry to initiate and promote placement of students.
- Coordinates the development of special programs or opportunities for special students — (handicapped, special education).
- Participates in organization or represents special groups in business-industry (Dental Association, Restaurant Association, Personnel Groups).
- Coordinates, develops and maintains current data on employers, placements, business-industry contacts, and employment records on youth eligible for services.
- Assists in follow-up studies and evaluation of co-op work programs.
- Assists in the development of visual aids and materials to be used in school, business-industry, and the public.
- Provides placement or referral services for youth exiting school without diplomas.
- Establishes and coordinates youth employment committees in local districts.
- Makes recommendations for the development of vocational training sites in cooperation with the vocational teacher.
- Provides the vocational teacher with specific information related to the placement and follow-up of vocational graduates.

Job Development

Job Development, as the term indicates, might consist of the development of jobs for youth where none existed before, or the employment of youth in new areas within a company where they are not currently employed.

- In some cases, groups of youth might be encouraged to develop their own businesses. A program similar to the Junior Achievement program, only for out of school youth, might be developed. Special groups of handicapped or disadvantaged youth might receive special help from business groups in forming service companies.
- Females might be provided with data related to jobs, in formerly all male occupations and vice-verse.
- Employers might be encouraged to employ youth where formerly they had employed much older employees.
- In come cases, job re-evaluation might be necessary. Employers sometimes have unrealistic job requirements. Employers who are constantly seeking youth of high ability might be shown that youth with less ability might prove to be more productive, satisfied employees. In the areas of job development and job re-evaluation, it is important that the placement specialist not only be knowledgeable concerning an employers needs, but the youth he is working with as well. The placement specialist must be persuasive rather than abrasive.
- Job Development and job re-evaluation is a time consuming activity which statistically may result in few placements initially, however, in time it will open doors currently closed to youth employment.

With the addition of each vocational program, job development takes on more importance. We can no longer afford to sit back and passively hope that our youth will find suitable employment. They must be provided with services which will facilitate their entry into suitable employment, commensurate with their interest, aptitude, and ability.



Evaluation of Job Placement Services

Any program appraised should involve students, employers, teachers, counselors, parents, and community groups. In those areas where Manpower Planning Committees exist, they might well be included in the evaluation process.

Certainly, the most elementary form of evaluation would be an analysis of the number available for employment and the number placed on jobs. Data related to business contacts, job referrals, special program development, and retention or up-grading on the job might be included in an evaluation format.

Areas such as reduction of dropouts, improvement of community relations, expansion of vocation programming, and lessening of youth dissatisfaction, might also be considered in evaluation. Improvement in attendance, as well as the functions of career education programs, might also be considered in an evaluation design. Career education should benefit to the extent that students will be better informed and make more realistic career decisions, as a result of job placement services.

Each district should determine its goal prior to the implementation of a placement program. Normally, the three basic objectives are the following:

1. Placement and follow-up services for all youth commensurate with their interests, aptitude, and ability.
2. Preparation activities directed to all youth exiting school which will enable them to obtain and retain employment.
3. Development of lines of communication with business and industry which will facilitate the successful entry of youth exiting school into the labor market, would form the overall basis for evaluation.

Forms and procedures for the evaluation process should be developed prior to the implemenation of the program. It is expected that data would be maintained related to placements, follow-ups, and business contacts.

It is of prime importance that evaluative procedures be built into the program and implemented periodically, as well as on a yearly basis.

Evaluative data can be utilized for curriculum modification, in-service training, newspaper, televison reports, as well as for the modification of the placement service.

FOLLOW-UP

Contact with an employer should be maintained after a placement has been made. Personal contact is most effective but can be supplemented with a mail-out follow-up form

Retention on a job may sometimes be jeopardized by a simple misunderstanding which the Placement Specialist might be able to overcome if contact is maintained with the employer and employee.

- Whenever possible more than one youth should be sent for a job interview so that the employer may have a choice.
- Programs might be developed whereby the prospective employer would be invited to interview youth in the school.

The Placement Specialist would be responsible for working in the area of Business-Industry communications and cooperation but would need the support of the School Administration to do so.

Without solid cooperation and communication, any placement service will have limited success at the most.

- Prospective employers can be invited to visit the vocational programs in school. Feedback from employers can be utilized in the preparation of youth for job interviews.
- Data regarding local, state and National Labor Laws, could be provided to employers by the Placement Specialist.

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